Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 003900

61
ORIGIN ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 SAB-01 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20

RSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 PRS-01

USIE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /092 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/PAF:KLMARSHALL:STT
APPROVED BY ARA/PAF:BBELL
ARA/CCA:ESLITTLE (INFO)
ARA/PAN:SMBELL (INFO)
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TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS IMMEDIATE
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E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS: XM, PFOR
SUBJECT: NOON BRIEFING

FOLLOWING EXCHANGE OCCURRED AT NOON BRIEFING JAN. 8, 1974, ON (1) CUBA, (2) PANAMA AND (3) POSSIBLE LATIN AMERICAN TRAVEL BY SECRETARY:

(1) CUBA: Q: DO YOU ATTACH ANY SIGNIFICANCE TO THE STATEMENTS MADE BY THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR IN MEXICO CITY?

A: I THINK THAT OUR POSITION ON CUBA WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY BACK IN HIS DECEMBER 27 (PRESS CONFERENCE). AND WE HAVE NOT HEARD ANYTHING FURTHER FROM THE CUBANS THEMSELVES TO WARRANT ANY FURTHER CHANGE FROM THAT POINT OF VIEW NOW.

Q: DO YOU DETECT A CHANGE IN TONE IN THE --

A: WELL, THERE ARE MANY OFFICIAL AND SEMIOFFICIAL WAYS OF
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PAGE 02 STATE 003900

COMMUNICATING; AND I THINK WE WOULD BE LOOKING AT EVERYTHING WE RECEIVED. BUT THIS IS ONE INSTANCE THAT'S COME OUT OF THE BLUE FROM MEXICO, AND WE LEAVE IT THERE.

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Q: WERE YOU REFERRING TO HIS COMMENT THAT THE MAIN BARRIER TO

RAPPROCHEMENT IS CUBA'S HOSTILITY TO THE U.S.?
A.YES.
Q: IN ADVANCE?

A: THAT'S RIGHT.

Q: ARE YOU SAYING THAT WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED ANYTHING THROUGH OFFICIAL OR OTHER CHANNELS, ONLY THIS ONE VOICE?

A: I'M NOT AWARE OF ANYTHING FURTHER THAT WE HAVE RECEIVED IN THE INTERVENING PERIOD --

Q: I'M NOT QUITE SURE WHAT YOU ARE SAYING. ISN'T THIS A MESSAGE? ISN'T THIS A CHANNEL, AND RATHER OFFICIAL? AFTER ALL, THE MAN IS AN AMBASSADOR.

A: I WOULD NOT WANT TO JUMP TO THE CONCLUSION THAT IT IS NECESSARILY A MESSAGE. EVERYTHING THAT ONE SEES AND READS GETS ITS EVALUATION. BUT I WOULDN'T WANT FORMALLY TO JUMP TO ANY RESPONSIVE POSITION.

Q: BUT YOU ARE NOT DISMISSING IT AS MEANINGLESS?

A: NO. WE WOULD WEIGH EVERYTHING THAT COUNTS, OF COURSE.

(2) PANAMA: Q: THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS FROM PANAMA THAT THE UNITED STATES AND PANAMA ARE ABOUT TO AGREE ON A STATE-MENT OF PRINCIPLES FOR NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING THE CANAL. IS THAT CORRECT?

A: NO, NOT PRECISELY. IT'S MY UNDERSTANDING THAT AMBASSADOR BUNKER IS IN PANAMA. HE IS DISCUSSING PRINCIPLES WHICH MIGHT SERVE AS A FRAMEWORK FOR SUBSEQUENT TREATY NEGOTIATIONS. BUT THESE ARE STILL EXPLORATORY TALKS AND WE HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED THE RESULTS OF THE
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PAGE 03 STATE 003900

CURRENT CONVERSATIONS. AND I DON'T HAVE THE IMPRESSION -- PERHAPS I SHOULD GO ON BACKGROUND -- I DON'T HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THOSE TALKS HAVE REACHED A CULMINATING PHASE YET.

Q: IT CERTAINLY WOULD APPEAR THAT A GREAT DEAL OF PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THE LAST THREE OR FOUR MONTHS.

A: I THINK WE ARE REASONABLY ENCOURAGED WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE GOING; BUT THERE WERE REPORTS IN THE PRESS WHICH I THINK LED PEOPLE TO BELIEVE SOMETHING WAS ABOUT TO BEAR

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

FRUIT ALMOST ANY MOMENT, AND I DON'T HAVE THAT IMPRESSION AT THE PRESENT TIME.

Q: I'D LIKE TO ASK ON THE RECORD AND GET AN ANSWER ON THE RECORD TO REPORTS. I THINK THE ANSWER IS OBVIOUS, FROM WHAT YOU SAID. BUT THERE'S A REPORT TODAY OUT OF MEXICO THAT DR. KISSINGER WOULD BE IN PANAMA LATE THIS MONTH TO SIGN AN AGREEMENT OF SOME SORT. FROM WHAT YOU SAY, I ASSUME HE WILL NOT.

A: YES. ON THE RECORD, I WOULD SAY WE KNOW HE'S SCHEDULED TO BE IN MEXICO FEBRUARY 21-23. HE'S ACCEPTED THAT. AND THERE ARE NO FIRM PLANS AT THE PRESENT TIME FOR ANY OTHER VOYAGE INTO THE LATIN AMERICAN AREA.

Q: WELL, ONE OF THOSE REPORTS WAS THAT DURING HIS VISIT TO MEXICO HE WILL SIGN OR ANNOUNCE AN AGREEMENT OF PRINCIPLES ON THE PANAMA CANAL NEGOTIATIONS; IS THAT CORRECT?

A: I THINK YOU SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT ANY FIRM -- I USE THE WORD "FIRM" CAREFULLY -- ANY FIRM PLANS ARE DEPENDENT UPON THE NATURE OF THE PROGRESS ITSELF. AND, THEREFORE, IT'S TOO SOON TO CONSIDER WHAT MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT BE DONE. I MEAN IF THE DISCUSSION ONTHIS MATTER MOVES RAPIDLY THERE-'S ONE SET OF OPTIONS. IF THEY MOVE MORE SLOWLY, OTHER CONSIDERATIONS WOULD OBVIOUSLY WEIGH.

Q: WELL, FOR CLARIFICATION, COULD YOU EXPLAIN HERE WHETHER, IN TERMS OF FEASIBILITY, IT IS FEASIBLE TO COMPLETE NEGOTIATIONS AT ANY POINT IN FEBRUARY, OR IS WHAT IS
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BEING DISCUSSED HERE AN INTERMEDIATE POINT IN THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS?

A: WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT HERE IS AN INTERMEDIATE ONE IN THE SENSE THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE AN AGREEMENT ON PRINCIPLES. IN MY UNDERSTANDING, AN AGREEMENT ON PRINCIPLES AT SOME STAGE IS CONCEIVABLE.

Q: FROM YOUR CONSTANT EXPOSURE TO THE SECRETARY, WOULD YOU FEEL THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO GO TO MEXICO CITY, WHERE ALL THE FOREIGN MINISTERS WILL BE, WITH SUCH A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES IN HIS HOT LITTLE HANDS?

A: FROM MY OBSERVATION, AS YOU KNOW, IN PRINCIPLE THE SECRETARY HAS EXPRESSED A LOT OF INTEREST IN LATIN AMERICA, AND IT WOULD NATURALLY BE DESIRABLE TO HAVE REACHED SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT BEFOREHAND.

(3) POSSIBLE LATIN AMERICAN TRAVEL: Q: WHEN YOU WERE

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

DISCUSSING THE SECRETARY'S TRIP TO MEXICO, DID YOU MEAN TO JIMPLY THAT HE WOULD NOT BE GOING TO OTHER COUNTRIES, BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN LED TO UNDERSTAND THAT HE PLANS TO MAKE SEVERAL STOPS IN LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES PRIOR TO THE MEXICO MEETING.

A: I REALIZE AT AN EARLIER TIME THERE WAS SOME TALK ABOUT THIS, BUT ALL I CAN SAY IS THAT IT IS MY BELIEF THAT, INTERESTED AS HE IS IN A TRIP TO LATIN AMERICA, NONE IS SCHEDULED TO GO THROUGH LATIN AMERICA BEFORE THAT MEXICAN VISIT.

Q: ARE YOU SAYING THEN THAT THAT CONSIDERATION HAS BEEN DROPPED, THE CONSIDERATION BEING GIVEN TO STOPPING IN SEVERAL OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES?

A: BEFORE MEXICO -- IT'S NOT ON THE DRAWING BOARD NOW.

Q: HOW ABOUT AFTER MEXICO? ANY OF THAT SORT?

A: I WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE THIS OPEN. AS I MENTIONED, HE HAS AT REPEATED INTERVALS EXPRESSED HIS INTEREST, AND I
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PAGE 05 STATE 003900

WOULD NOT WANT TO RULE OUT ANY POSSIBILITY WHATEVER, ANY POSSIBILITY OF ANY TYPE OF VISIT AFTER MEXICO, BECAUSE THAT'S FAR ENOUGHT AHEAD FOR THINGS TO BE SCHEDULED.

Q: HE'S QUOTED BY ONE OF THE WIRE SERVICES AS HAVING TOLD THE AMBASSADOR OF ARGENTINA AT A SWEARING-IN THAT HE WILL VISIT ARGENTINA IN APRIL. IS THAT NOW THE TIME FRAME FOR A LARGER LATIN AMERICAN TRIP?

A: NOTHING DEFINITE IS PLANNED TO MY KNOWLEDGE. THERE MAY BE A QUESTION OF VERB TENSE AS TO WHETHER SOMETHING "WILL BE" DONE OR WHETHER SOMETHING "MIGHT BE" DONE OR HE "WOULD LIKE" TO DO SOMETHING. I CAN'T SAY. BUT I KNOW NOTHING IS SCHEDULED AT THE PRESENT TIME. KISSINGER

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Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 27 JUL 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGREEMENTS, CANALS, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, MINISTERIAL VISITS, NEGOTIATIONS, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE003900
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: ARA/PAF:KLMARSHALL:STT
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740175/abbrzbpt.tel
Line Count: 206
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 FEB 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 FEB 2002 by elbezefj>; APPROVED <19-Nov-2002 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 971021
Subject: NOON BRIEFING
TAGS: PFOR, CU, MX, PN, US, XM
To: ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS
USUN N Y
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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